Ministry of Social Services

Plan for 2012-13

Government of
Saskatchewan

PLAN FOR 2012-13

Statement from the Minister

The Government's Direction and Budget for 2012-13 are built around supporting our sound economic growth so that prosperity can be shared across the province. I am proud to present Social Services' Plan for *Keeping the Saskatchewan Advantage*, in the coming year and beyond, for our most vulnerable citizens.

In 2012-13, we will build on the progress we have made in a number of critical areas. With our First Nation and Métis partners, we will work to transform the child welfare system. We will continue to implement the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan, working with housing sector stakeholders to increase supply and affordability. We will focus on making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for people with disabilities by expanding the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program and completing the Waitlist Initiative. Seniors will benefit from increases to the Seniors Income Plan and the new Personal Care Home benefit. These are only a few of the initiatives we will undertake this year to offer better service and a brighter future to our clients throughout the province.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2012-13 Annual Report.

Honourable June Draude
Minister of Social Services

Response to Government Direction

Government has renewed its plan for 2012-13 to encourage and support the *Saskatchewan Advantage*. This plan reflects the Government's continued focus on economic growth, supporting the creation of new opportunities through strategic investments, ensuring that the prosperity is shared and our quality of life is enhanced. Government's key priorities and commitments have been supported in the context of a disciplined four-year fiscal plan and are presented in the *Government Direction for 2012-13*.

Government's Vision

"... a strong and growing Saskatchewan, the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Improving our quality of life	Making life more affordable	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide a directional framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align with these priorities and to develop their plans to achieve greater success in the efficient delivery of government services.

All ministries and agencies will report on results achieved, or not yet achieved, in their 2012-13 annual reports. This honours Government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

The Ministry's Plan is organized according to four main categories: citizen independence and well-being; learning and renewal; infrastructure and efficient and effective process; and collaborative engagement. These four themes support Government's key priorities and the Ministry's mandate.

Mission, Strategies and Actions

Mission Statement

We protect Saskatchewan's vulnerable people and support their inclusion in the province's prosperity.

Citizen Independance and Well Being:
Delivering on core business through citizen-centred approaches.

Strategy

Lead and support child welfare transformation

Key Actions

- Enhance prevention supports and address key determinants in the child welfare system.
- Work differently with First Nations and Métis partners to develop a change agenda in the child welfare system.
- Renew the child welfare system through an examination of enhanced service delivery models and legislative direction.

Strategy

Lead and support the implementation of the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan

Key Actions

- Support housing stakeholders to ensure an adequate supply of housing.
- Modify the housing delivery system to match those in housing need.
- Target housing programs and services to those in need.
- Provide leadership to the provincial government in housing matters.

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine s

Strategy

Improve the quality of life and support community inclusion for people with disabilities

Key Actions

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities by expanding enrollment and enhancing benefits for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program (SAID).
- Continue long-term planning to address residential and disability support needs, including consultations with Valley View Centre residents, their families and concerned stakeholders to identify services required to meet the individual needs of each resident.

Strategy

Implement improvements to income supports to decrease complexity, enhance efficiency and improve outcomes

Key Actions

- Plan for and begin to re-engineer income assistance programs including basic income and disability supports, income supplementation and housing support programs.
- Increase benefits for the Seniors Income Plan (SIP) as part of the Seniors Affordability Plan.
- Design and implement the new Seniors Personal Care Home Benefit as part of the Seniors Affordability Plan.
- Index income assistance shelter allowances.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridges

Learning and Renewal:
People Management

Strategy

Foster a culture of leadership where all employees strive for innovation, continuous improvement and service excellence

Key Actions

- To support the Ministry in furthering a culture of high performance:
  - build a culture of renewal;
  - build leadership capacity for the public service;
  - ensure organizational capabilities meet current and future needs;
  - attract, engage and retain youth and diversity employees; and,
  - hold the organization accountable.

Strategy

Support a safe, healthy and respectful work environment

Key Actions

- Identify and address Occupational Health and Safety issues and training needs.
- Implement best practices for a safe, healthy and respectful workplace across the organization.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Dock Jumpi

Infrastructure and Efficient and Effective Process:
Simplifying Business

Strategy

Adopt and integrate citizen-centred strategies and actions into the delivery of Ministry programs and services

Key Actions

- Apply a citizen-centred lens to ensure that client needs and expectations become the driving force behind service delivery through improved access channels, greater timeliness of service, enhanced staff knowledge and commitment, simplified processes and a better integration of services.

Strategy

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Ministry programs, services and processes to improve client outcomes and ensure the best use of public funds

Key Actions

- Enhance accountability through:
  - a risk management framework;
  - an improved performance management system;
  - a systematic program review cycle; and,
  - a business technology plan that leverages the use of information technology to support the Ministry's core programs.
- Support the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to become the industry leader in effective and efficient property management.
- Implement an enterprise wide client information and case management system to support clients and programs across the Ministry with a seamless citizen-centred technology solution.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Davin Andrie, Hunt Falls

Collaborate Engagement:
Implementing Enterprise Approaches

Strategy

Improve service delivery through partnerships with other governments, ministries and community partners

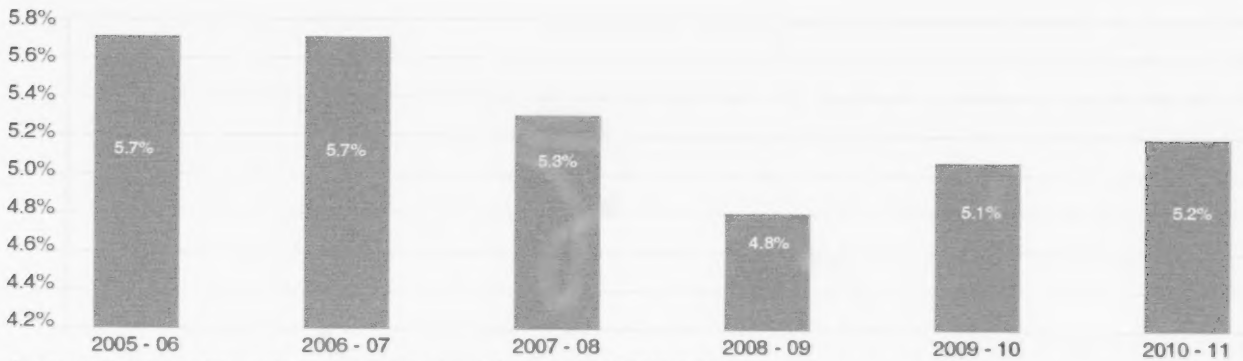
Key Actions

- In collaboration with other human service ministries, support the action plan for the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda.
- Foster an enterprise approach engaging a broad range of partners and stakeholders in the design, development and support of programs and services.
- Expand the engagement of third parties, other ministries and Crown corporations to increase the Ministry's capacity to respond to disaster events.
- Lead efforts to address key aspects of sex-and gender based equality in the province through engagement of government ministries, Crown Corporations, agencies and stakeholders.

Performance Measures

Measure

Percentage of population 0 to 64 years who receive social assistance



Source: SWIN and Saskatchewan Health Covered Population 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, & 2010

NOTE: Social assistance recipients include beneficiaries of the Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP), Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA), and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program.

Measure Description

Social assistance provides for the basic needs of individuals and families without alternative means of financial support. Social assistance recipients include beneficiaries from the three major programs. The Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) is designed for families and individuals who for various reasons, including disability, illness or unemployment, cannot meet basic living costs. The Transitional Employment Allowance is an income support program for people who are more job-ready and are seeking employment. The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program is an income support program for persons with significant and long-term disabilities and is delivered separately from SAP. Introduced in 2009, this program is the result of collaboration between the Ministry and disability community.

The social assistance dependency rate reflects the proportion of Saskatchewan's off-reserve population aged 0 to 64 years who depend on social assistance for basic income. This proportion declined from 5.7 per cent in 2005 to 5.2 per cent in 2011.

The social assistance dependency rate may be influenced by changes in population, the state of the economy, demand for labour and disability rates. While many of these factors are external to the work of the Ministry, the relative stability of the social assistance dependency rate over the last five years speaks to the success of the Ministry's efforts in helping its most vulnerable clients to regain and maintain independence. To support the transition of employable clients to economic independence, the Ministry delivers, in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, programs such as *Accelerating Connections to Employment, JobsFirst and Employment Service for Parents*. Ongoing and planned future work to re-engineer income assistance programs and reposition the Ministry on a new technology platform (Linkin) will improve income supports, decrease complexity, enhance efficiency and most importantly, improve outcomes for citizens.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Devona Hill Photography, Rolling Pines Golf and Country Resort

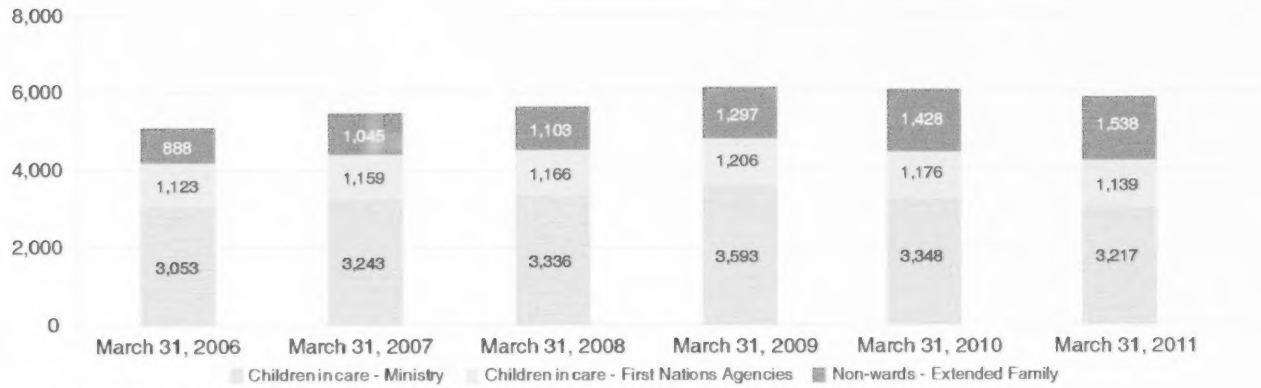
Measure Description Continued

This measure also reflects Government's achievements in safeguarding vulnerable citizens, and in ensuring an improved quality of life and community inclusion for people with disabilities. The recent increase in the social assistance dependency rate is in part a result of establishment of the new SAID program for people with severe and lasting disabilities. In 2012-13, the program is expected to receive up to 10,000 new clients, which will affect the social assistance dependency rate. The Ministry will review how this measure is calculated and reported in the next reporting cycles.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, photo by Paul Austring, Blue Sky over Duck Mountain

Measure

Number of children in out-of-home care



Source: Social Services, Monthly Automated Client Index Report and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.
NOTES:
The numbers above show the number of active cases on March 31 for each year and include all children in the province who are placed in out-of-home care.
The number of children in care of the Ministry includes all children taken into the care of the Ministry off-reserve as well as those children taken into the care of the Ministry off-reserve and subsequently placed in an out-of-home care resource on-reserve.
The Government of Saskatchewan has delegated the delivery of child protection services for children living on-reserve to First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies across the province. Statistics related to the number of children taken into care on-reserve are received from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AAND) each year. Some numbers are not identical to those previously provided due to reconciliation of expenditures by AAND.
Non-wards are children who have been placed by court order in the custody of extended family members or with other "persons of sufficient interest" with whom the child has a relationship. These children and extended family caregivers are supported by the Ministry.

Measure Description

This measure reflects the Ministry's engagement with, and support of, vulnerable families to ensure children at risk of neglect and abuse are safely sheltered in temporary or permanent out-of-home care. This is consistent with Government's commitment to improve quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens and families. The measure shows the overall number of cases managed by the Ministry and indicates trends in the Ministry's management of out-of-home care options.

Out-of-home care options for children include placements in foster homes, group homes and residential care facilities, or with extended family members or others with whom the child has a significant relationship. While the recent trend toward stability and even decline in the overall rate is good news, the safety of children and support for at-risk families remain the top priority. The imperative to provide prevention services and care for vulnerable children, including culturally appropriate options for First Nations and Métis children, is paramount.

To the extent that out-of-home placements are necessary to keep children safe and give families time to stabilize and strengthen, the most important story told by this measure may be the degree to which family, social relationships, and culture shape and inform out-of-home care arrangements. In the past five years, the number of non-wards, or children who are placed with extended family and "persons of sufficient interest", has nearly doubled and continues to grow. This is good news. Growth in the number of children in the care of First Nations Agencies is increasing and

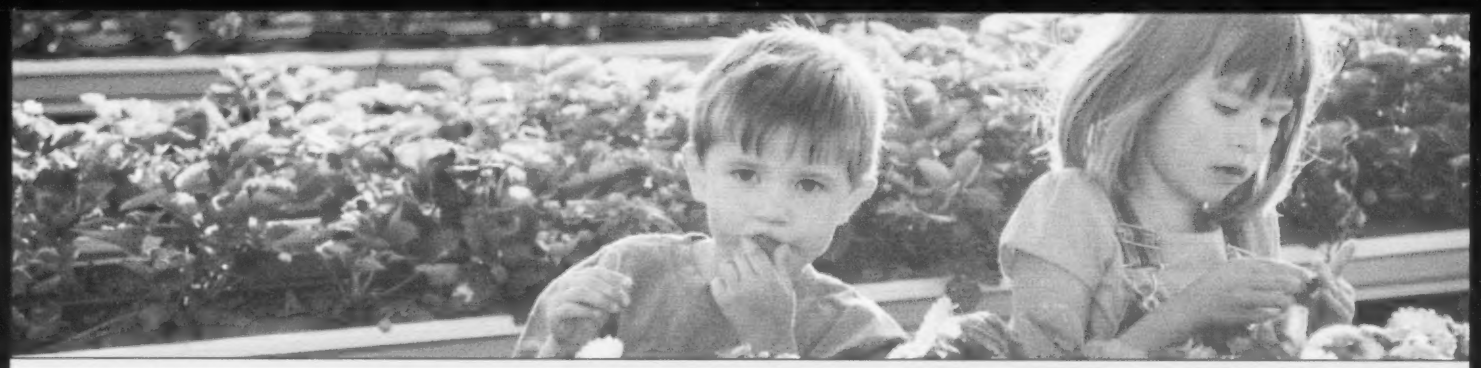


Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Over the Hill Orchards

Measure Description Continued

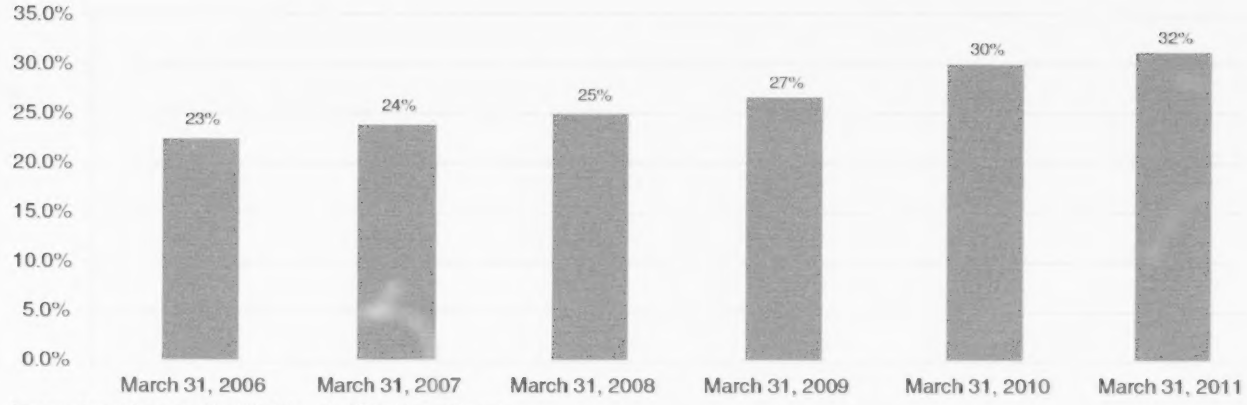
the number of children in the care of the Ministry is declining. These are positive trends that reflect a deliberate and successful shift in Government philosophy and practice, a stronger voice for First Nations and Métis people, and the increased influence of family, community and culture in shaping the way we care for our children.

Child welfare in Saskatchewan is undergoing a fundamental transformation that is intended to achieve a high level of engagement with First Nations and Métis partners, support and strengthen family structures and relationships, and respect cultural integrity. This measure reflects the degree to which current and future prevention and support work with at-risk and high-risk families is successful in keeping children either safely in their family homes, or placing them in the care of extended family or near social relationships. Success in work to transform child welfare will be reflected in a reduction in the number of children in the care of the Ministry.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, Broadway Brid

Measure

Proportion of children in out-of-home care who are non-wards



Source: Social Services, Monthly Automated Client Index Report

NOTES:

The numbers above are the number of active cases on March 31 for each year. They are calculated by dividing the number of non-wards by all children in out-of-home placements.

The numbers do not include children in the care of First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies.

Non-wards are children who have been placed by court order in the custody of extended family members or with other families with whom the child has an existing relationship. They are not wards of the Ministry but their placement is supported by the Ministry.

Measure Description

When children are at risk of abuse or neglect, it may be necessary for the Ministry to find an alternate living arrangement to ensure their safety and well-being. The Ministry's policy is to place children, whenever possible, with extended family or other caregivers with whom they have an existing and significant relationship.

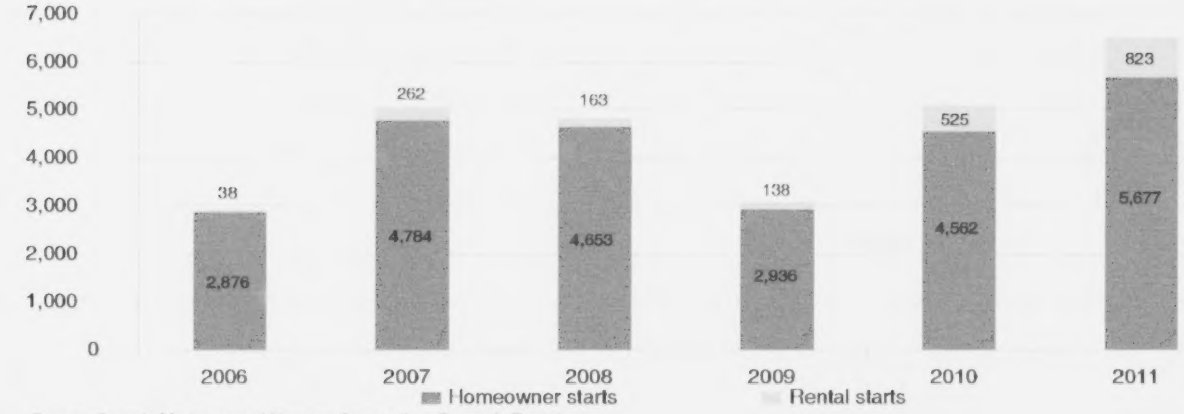
This measure speaks to the Ministry's contribution to improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan children and families. It reflects the Ministry's commitment to supporting at-risk children and families, and its achievements in integrating new practices that will transform the Province's child welfare system. These achievements illustrate the Ministry's success in ensuring that children in out-of-home care remain closely connected to their extended family. This is especially important for First Nations and Métis children as it ensures a culturally appropriate placement.

For 2012-13, the Ministry will lead and support the ongoing transformation of Saskatchewan's child welfare system in collaboration with First Nations and Métis partners. Among initiatives to emphasize prevention and improve service delivery is an increased level of support for extended family caregivers to help strengthen these placements and reduce the incidence of children returning to foster care.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Jones Peak, near Eastend

Measure

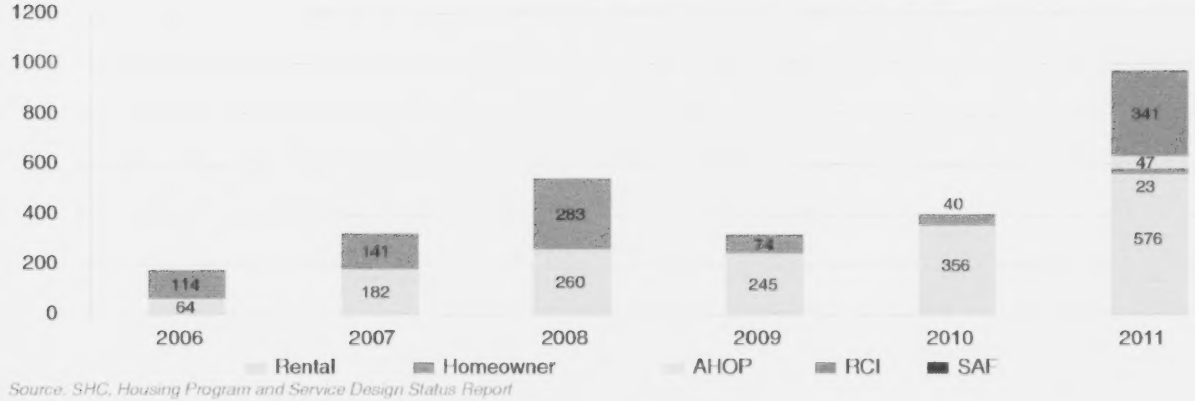
Housing market starts in Saskatchewan urban communities



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Quarterly Reports

Measure

Saskatchewan Housing completed housing units



Source: SHC, Housing Program and Service Design Status Report

NOTES:

Urban communities are those with population of 10,000 and above

Some numbers are not identical to those previously provided due to reconciliation of year-end information or changes in the nature of program delivery.

The chart shows Summit Action Fund (SAF), Affordable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) and Rental Construction Incentive (RCI) for 2011 separately to allow comparison with previous years while highlighting the impact of these new supply initiatives. While there were no completed housing units developed through SAF in 2011, SAF projects that received funding in 2011 are expected to result in the addition of at least 166 new units, with the potential for many more.AHOP & RCI are based on annual cash flowed commitments.

Affordable Rental category includes unit completions under the Rental Development Program, Secondary Suites, and Conversion Programs.

Data presented is for the calendar year, which is consistent with SHC corporate reporting.

Some numbers are not identical to those previously provided due to reconciliation of year-end information or changes in the nature of program delivery.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Educati

Measures Description

Stable and affordable housing enables people to work, engage in education and skills training opportunities, increase their financial savings, and participate in the community. The province's steady economy and growing population have created a strong demand for housing in Saskatchewan communities, including affordable housing options. Saskatchewan Housing's work to address this demand supports Government's direction on economic growth and improved quality of life for the citizens of the province.

While the situation in the housing sector is strongly linked to the health of the economy and market incentives to develop or provide housing for rent, Government actions play a key role in ensuring its balanced development across the continuum of housing needs. These two measures clearly illustrate the positive impact housing-related initiatives and programs have had on Saskatchewan's housing sector.

Since 2006, the overall number of urban housing starts has increased 123 per cent. Increase in the number of rental housing starts was even more dramatic. The number of rental housing units initiated in 2011 exceeded the 2006 level of construction activity in this segment close to 22 times. Allocation of new federal and provincial funding streams has dramatically increased the number of housing units available for low- to moderate-income households.

The 2012-13 Ministry Plan contains additional measures to work with the different partners in the housing sector, to increase the supply of housing and target housing to those in need.

Financial Summary

2012-13 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	42,973
Income Assistance and Disability Services	575,013
Child and Family Services	205,928
Client Support	33,067
Housing	14,648
Ministry Appropriation	**871,629**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(21,657)
Capital Asset Amortization	2,753
Ministry Expense	**852,725**
FTE Staff Complement	1,793.4

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/Budget2012-13

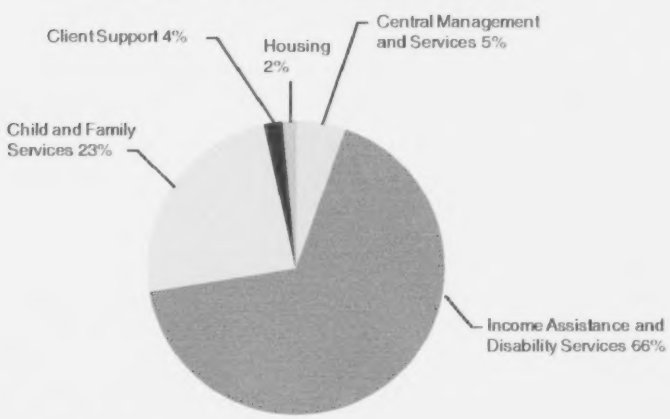

Social Services 2012-13 Spending by Area
Client Support 4%
Housing 2%
Central Management and Services 5%
Child and Family Services 23%
Income Assistance and Disability Services 66%

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Cycling near Saskatoo

Highlights

In 2012-13, the Ministry will continue to support Saskatchewan's vulnerable citizens.

Social Services continues to invest in support for people with disabilities, and in 2012-13 will:

- Increase benefits and eligibility for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. Benefits will increase over the next four years, with the largest increase in 2012 - $17.8 million:
  - people in residential care will receive an additional $40 in June, increasing to $100 per month over four years;
  - single individuals, living independently, will receive an increase of $200 in June, increasing to an average of $350 per month over four years; and,
  - couples, living independently, will receive a $230 increase in June, increasing to an average of $400 per month over four years.
- Provide services for the remaining 67 of the original 440 clients with intellectual disabilities who were on a waiting list for specialized residential and day programs, and place another 20 clients in specialized programs – $3.4 million; and,
- Begin to plan and prepare for the transition of clients from Valley View Centre into new or expanded community and government-based services, including expanded capacity for individuals with complex needs.

The Ministry of Social Services will continue to support low-income seniors through:

- increases to the maximum monthly benefit under the Seniors Income Plan by up to $50 for single seniors and each member of a couple – $3.3 million; and,
- development of a new Personal Care Home Benefit that will subsidize the difference between a senior's monthly income and $1,800 - $3.5 million.

To support those in housing need, the Ministry of Social Services will:

- lead the development of a Government-wide housing action plan in support of *A Strong Foundation – The Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan*;
- partner with key stakeholders to host the 2012 Housing Summit to discuss plans and begin to work towards solutions to meet the demand for housing in Saskatchewan;
- expand the Affordable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) and the Rental Construction Incentive (RCI) - $2.0 million;
- introduce a new rental housing construction incentive by providing a 10-year rebate of corporate income tax;
- adjust shelter rates for low income families - $0.6 million;
- introduce legislation to extend notice periods for rent increases from six months to one year; and,
- continue the Secondary Suites Program for the development of approximately 70 to 100 secondary suites.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, David Buckley, Canoeing, MacFarlane River

The 2012-13 Budget includes an additional investment of $6.0 million for the Children and Youth Agenda, in addition to the 2011-12 investment of $34.0 million for a cross-government approach to the complex issues facing Saskatchewan children, youth and families.

Social Services will provide increased funding of $5.5 million. Some of the key initiatives in this investment include:

- implementing a best-practice Structured Decision Making tool to help front line workers make the best decisions regarding risk and safety issues for children and families - $3.0 million;
- constructing a new group home to help reunite mothers with their babies who are in care – $0.35 million - and develop 20 additional out-of-home residential care spaces - $0.8 million;
- continuing work with First Nations, Métis and other stakeholders to transform the child welfare system; and,
- focusing on prevention through supports for families in crisis to reduce the need for child apprehensions – $1.0 million.

The Ministry will also:

- continue to provide Emergency Social Services for Saskatchewan people in disaster situations, including transportation, shelter, food, and clothing when local community capacity to respond is exceeded; and,
- provide Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with a 1.6 per cent increase.

To enhance efficiency and effectiveness in 2012-13, the Ministry of Social Services will:

- streamline and enhance accountability in CBO management through expanded use of multi-year contracts and continued improvement in CBO information and performance management systems;
- continue to re-engineer income assistance programs including basic income and disability supports, income supplementation and housing support programs and service delivery guided by a citizen-centred approach;
- continue to implement an enterprise wide client information and case management system (Linkin) to support clients and programs across the Ministry with a seamless citizen-centred technology solution- $17.5 million; and,
- continue the systematic review of core programs to ensure they are relevant and effective in meeting citizen's needs.

For More Information

Please visit our website at www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca for more information on the Ministry's programs and services or phone our Communications Branch at (306) 787-3686.

Front Page Photo Credits

Canola and flax fields	*Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial Park*	*Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site of Canada*	*Saskatchewan Legislative Building*
Photographer, Charles Melnick	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*